Weapon?

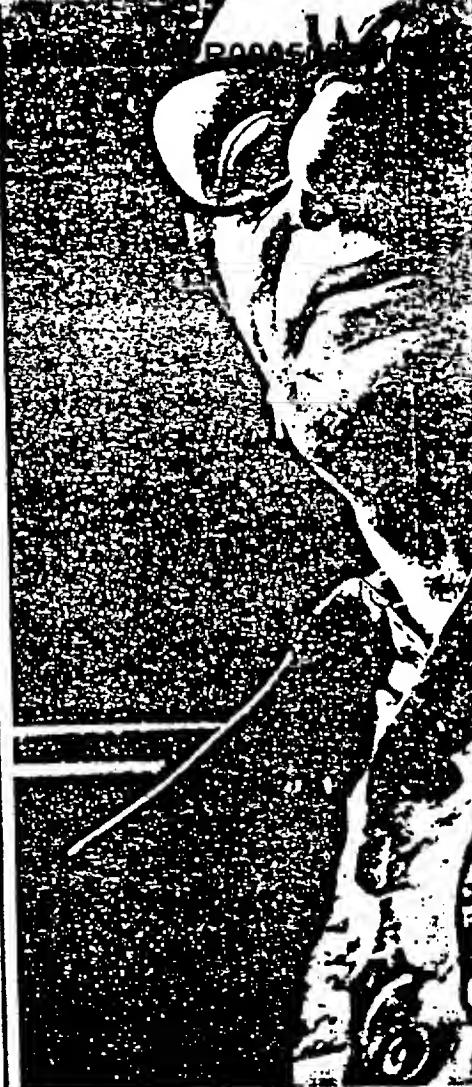## A Toronto inventor may hold the key to Entebbe

By David Jones

Two books have now been written on the daring raid which rescued 103 hijack hostages from Entebbe airport on July 3, 1976. Numerous interviews and official explanations have been given, yet the puzzle remains. How did the Israeli rescue mission manage to elude the radar of six nations lying beneath or alongside its flight path, including that of Uganda?

The answer to the Entebbe mystery may lie with a 64-year-old appliance repairman and heart patient. The first hint of Sid Hurwich's connection with the raid filtered out last June at a ceremony in Toronto's Beth Tzedec synagogue, where Hurwich was presented with the award of Protectors of the State of Israel on behalf of the Zionist Organization of Canada for a secret military device he had given Israel seven years earlier. Six weeks later an item appeared in the Toronto *Star* linking the Hurwich device to the raid on Entebbe. The wire services picked it up and the story took off around the world.

The most detailed account appeared in *Foreign Report*, a confidential diplomatic journal produced by England's prestigious *Economist* magazine. In an unsigned article apparently based on Israeli sources, the publication reports that "all that could be learned officially was that [Hurwich's] invention had been used in the Israeli raid at Entebbe last year." The article claims the invention "sends out electronic rays to alter the natural composition of the magnetic fields and centres of gravity of weapons, instrument dials and mechanical devices...On the Hurwich principle there was no reason why the new beams could not reach and disable tanks, ground-to-ground missiles and complete radar systems. The beams could also be tacked together to form a screen that would make whole zones safe from bombs or missiles. The Israelis will not divulge what tests have been run, or how the Hurwich ray has been developed."

According to his daughter, Sylvia Winkler, Hurwich "was around 9 when he started buying broken bicycles and putting them together, and when anybody threw out appliances, he would pick them up and put them together."

By 1934, with no training beyond high school, Hurwich had won a reputation as the first private appliance repairman in Canada—before that only the manufacturers did repairs. By the beginning of the Second World War he was known as a man "able to fix just about anything," tions on metals used in appliances, the repair business took off. By 1947 he had built it up into Shock Electric, which remains one of the largest businesses of its kind in Toronto. In another building he started Sidco Co., devoted to making electrical parts. When a heart attack in 1950 just about killed him, he sold the business and went into a comfortable retirement at the age of 36.

The idea for the Hurwich ray came to him one evening in 1969 as he read about a rash of robberies from bank night-deposit vaults. "It just clicked what to do," Hurwich says. "I picked up the phone to the police—I knew a lot of the boys—and I told them I think I can stop those thieveries in about half an hour."

Hurwich went to work in his basement with $50 worth of spare parts, and within a week had assembled a working model to test his theory. Inspector Bill Bolton, then head of the police hold-up squad, assembled police and bank security officials at Hurwich's home. "All I can recall," says Bolton "is that it was under the table—the device, whatever it was—and there was a bedspread over the table. He froze my service revolver. You

I've got a secret: Sid Hurwich, 64, was given th
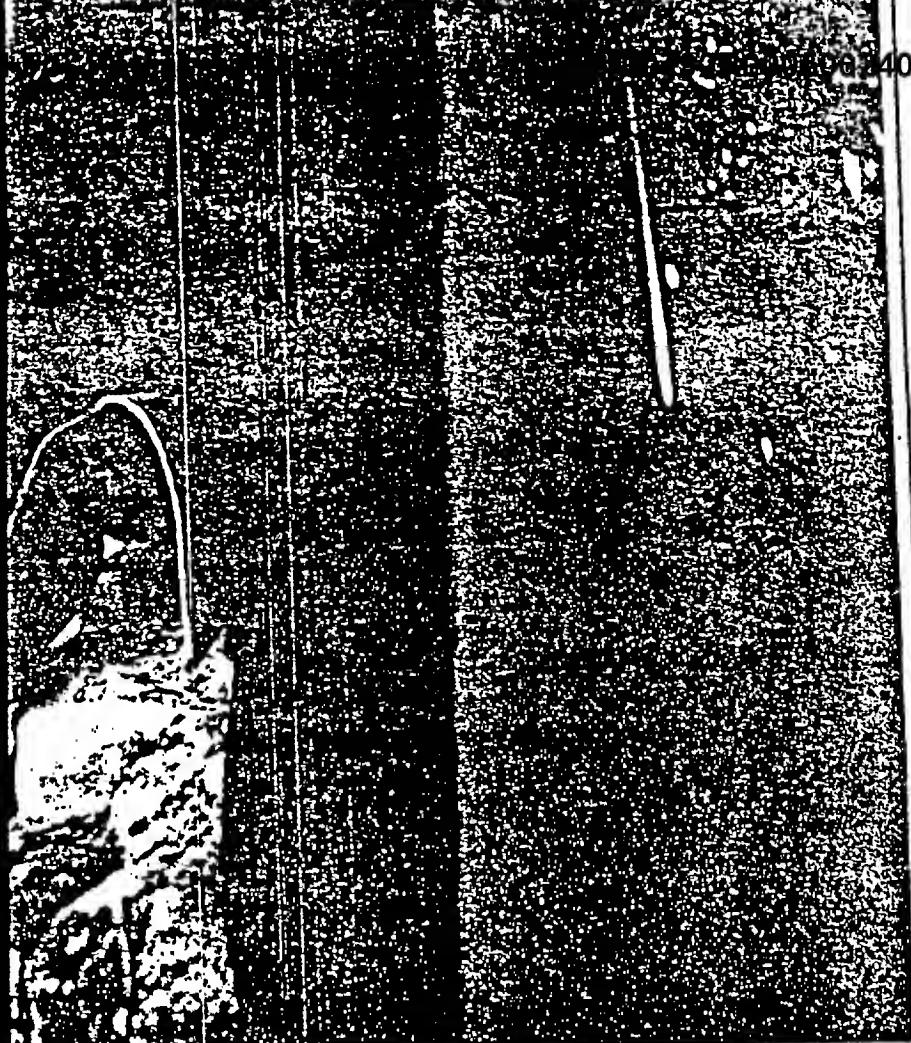
Photograph by Michael Mitchell

Protector of the State of Israel award by the Zionist Organization for his "military device."

it up off the table and even on the table you couldn't pull the trigger."

Hurwich continues: "And then I said 'Now take a look at your watches.' I remember one of them said, 'When did this happen?' and I said, 'The minute you walked through that door. You walked in there about 25 minutes ago. Now look at your watches. You're late about 25 minutes'".

As the security officers filed out of his home, Hurwich's wife overheard one of them suggest that the army should be told about the device. "That was the first time it ever entered my mind for war or army purposes or anything like that," Hurwich says. He went back to work in his basement. When he felt the device was ready he contacted a brother living in Israel. Hurwich has never been to Israel himself but he felt "they needed it more than anybody, what with the Arabs saying they'd like to push everyone into the sea." Hurwich received a visit shortly afterward from two high-ranking Israeli officers. After a brief demonstration they walked out with the working model and every plan and design Hurwich had.

Hurwich insists his device is not really an invention. He says he simply "took one of the oldest basic principles of electricity and put it to a different use."

Which principle he won't say, just as he refuses to discuss how the device works. It only works on objects that will carry a current, he says. It can be aimed and its range depends on its power source.

"Any magnet will stop a watch," explains Dr. Howard White, a Toronto consulting engineer. "It sounds to me like a very high-intensity electromagnetic field that he is able to project, but I don't know how he is generating it." White shakes his head skeptically. "From jamming a few guns to jamming electronic equipment at long range is a very large leap. But anything's possible."

Hurwich has never patented his device – he doesn't believe in patents. "It's so easy to copy," he says. "I've copied things from patents. Just make a minor change where they'd have a tough time in court proving I'd broken the patent." Nor has he received any money for his invention. Oppenheimer and Co. of New York wrote recently to "offer any service to assist you in determining the commercial feasibility of your work, and exploring avenues to bring your work to useful commercial purposes." Hurwich says "at this stage money doesn't enter my mind. I am not a youngster and I can't take it with me." ◁